EAST AND WEST SERIES

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BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL!

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T. L. VASWANI

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BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL !

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

The "East and West Series" seeks to spread the message of the saints and sages, the prophets and *rishis* of Humanity. They have appeared in all ages. They have sanctified both East and West.

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FOREWORD

"In the beginning," so we read in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, "this world was just Being, one only, without a second. It bethought itself:—'I am one : let me be many' " And out of this thought proceeded all that is,—men and angels, birds and animals, fish and fowl, ants and insects, trees and flowers, rivers and rocks, the sun and moon and stars.

Significant are the words of a Polynesian tradition:—"He was. Taaroa was his name : he stood in the void : no earth, no sky, no men. Taaroa calls to the four corners of the universe. Nothing replies. Alone existing, he changes himself into universe. Taaroa is the light, he is the seed, he is the base, he is the incorruptible. The universe is only the shell of Taaroa. It is he who puts it in motion and brings forth its harmony."

In the beginning was the One : out of Him is all that is. All that we see is a "visible garment of the Invisible." Behind the myriad forms that we have in the universe is the play of the One Power, the One *shakti*. The forms are innumerable : but the life that informs them all is One! There is but One Life in all. This is what makes creation, in the words of the Prophet of Islam, "one family."

Yes,—creation is one family. And all creatures,—though they may be at different stages of progression in the process we call evolution,—are bound together by ties of spiritual kinship. We cannot separate ourselves from those

whom we call the "lower" animals. They are lower in the scale of evolution, but they, like us, are members of the One Family. We have our duties towards them : and they have their rights which must not be trampled upon. And the very first right of every creature is the right to live. Therefore, we must not take away the life of any creature. Indeed, we must never take away that which we cannot give. And as we cannot restore a dead creature to life, we have no right to take away its life.

When man grows into this realisation, he will regard meat-eating as murder. He will, then, learn to touch every unit of life with reverence and love.

Life, itself, is an outpouring of God's Love. Creation, it is said, is an overflowing of God's Love. God desired to love something outside of Himself. "I am one," He thought; "so let Me be many!" And creation came into being. So it is that in the heart of every creature is the desire to love. Human beings desire to love and to be loved. In the measure in which we love, in that measure do we become God-like.

The power of loving is not restricted to human beings. Deep is the love which the dog, the cat, the horse have shown to man through the ages. And how quickly they,—and even wild animals,—respond to love! God is present in every creature. For where love is, God is!

Love is the light of life. Out of love cometh joy and every other blessing. He who has not experienced love has not known what it is to live.

Killing is a denial of love. To kill or to eat what

another has killed is to rejoice in cruelty. And cruelty hardens our hearts and blinds our vision, and we are unable to see that they whom we kill are our fellow-brothers and sisters in the One Family of Creation.

Not many of us are aware of the ruthlessness with which animals are treated in slaughter-houses. Here is an account given by Peter Hoffman who visited slaughter-houses in a number of places in India :—

"Goats and sheep are assembled for slaughter and literally dragged across the slaughter-house floor by one hind leg. They become apprehensive before they enter, and by this cruel method of handling, they are rendered incapable of putting up much of a fight against the man who is bringing them in. He can take several at a time, and since the floor is slippery with blood, it is impossible for the animals to get much of a foothold. They are dragged in, bleating and sometimes excreting from terror, trying to stand, but always falling in the slimy blood. They are dragged past newly dead carcasses, some being skinned, and swung into line over the blood gutter to await the knife. There a man sits on the struggling creature, who is now surrounded by dead and dying fellow-creatures, with their terrified cries in his ears, their blood and excrement all over him, and the horrible stench in his nostrils. Then comes the sharp pain of the knife cutting deep into his throat, and the terrifying feeling of doom and approaching darkness, with the sinking horror of being less and less able to fight against the enveloping blackness."

The history of humanity is stained by the cruel

treatment which was once meted out to slaves, to women and children. Humanity continues to be impeached at the bar of eternal justice by the merciless killing of animals by the million for human consumption.

It is believed by many that flesh-diet gives strength and vigour to the human body. When will we realise that he who kills another kills himself? He who feeds on death himself becomes food for death. He who inflicts suffering upon another brings suffering to himself. For this is an inviolable law of life:—"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he, also, reap!"

But it may be questioned:—"What of those who eat corn and vegetables and fruits? There is life in them, too!" Yes,—nothing is without life. The One Life is in all,—in sand and stone, in stream and star, in sun and moon, in fruit and flower, in man and mineral, in bird and animal. In some, however, life is asleep : in others life is dreaming : in yet others life has begun to stir. In a few, only few, life is fully awake.

In minerals and in plants, in vegetables and in fruits, life is slumbering. Different is the case with birds and animals. So it is that they feel the joy of living and the agony of dying. The bird singing on yon tree, the faithful dog following his master, the horse drawing the carriage have reached the stage of "duality." They are sensitive to pleasure and pain. Like us, they, too,are moving on to their goal : the goal is "unity." Their way is long and laborious. And we must help them in their onward march. He who helps others receives help. He who hinders others only

raises obstacles in his own path.

In the following pages have been brought together selections from the writings of Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani), the central thought of the selections being:—"Blessed are the merciful!" Beloved Dada, indeed, was a prophet of compassion and mercy, a voice of the voiceless ones. Every little thing he did was inspired by the vision cosmic. His life was as a flowing stream. The stream flowed on, singing the song of mercy and compassion.

Beloved Dada's compassion was not restricted to human beings : it extended to all creatures,—even to trees and flowers. He did not pluck flowers : he believed flowers had their families, and they must not be separated from one another. That is why he did not accept flower-garlands.

The quality of his soul was clearly revealed, also, in his treatment of animals. He could not resign himself to the suffering of animals at the cruel hand of the butcher. His daily prayer included the following aspiration:—"Bless, O Lord, the brother-beast and the brother-tree! Bless Thou all Thy creatures! In them all may I see reflected the beauty of Thy Face!"

He fed birds and cows and goats and stray dogs that scourged the streets for a bite of loaf. His love for animals extended far. Honey bees built their hives near his room and none dared disturb them. Someone who had been stung by them, more than once, said to him:—"How can bees and men live together?" "Then let the men go!" was his quiet reply.

Never was his joy greater than when he saved

a dumb creature of God from being slain. He pleaded with a policeman,—Nitchoo was his name,—who had trapped a dog and was taking it to the lethal "gas-chamber," and the policeman released the dog. "You are a saint of God," said the policeman to him, "and so I value your words more than the command of my earthly masters. Do remember me in Heaven!"

Dadaji purchased from a butcher a cow about to be slaughtered. And though the butcher, taking advantage of the situation, asked for an exhorbitant price, Dadaji paid it on the spot. When I drew his attention to the high price he had paid, he said :—" No price is too great to save a single life !"

Of Mahatma Gandhi, it is said that during one of his visits to Bombay, he got an attack of high fever. He became delirious. Waking up Shri Mahadev Desai in the middle of the night, Gandhiji said:—"The Bengalis sacrifice animals, in the name of religion, at the Kalighat Temple in Calcutta. This is the height of irreligion. Let us go and offer *satyagraha* there! May be, the infuriated priests will fall upon us and tear us to pieces. But if, in saving animals, we lose our lives, we will not have lived in vain."

Did not the Buddha offer his own life in place of a lamb at a king's sacrificial altar ? And I recall how, one day, there came to Beloved Dada a little girl, saying:—"Dada! I love your teaching more than words may tell. And you have urged, again and again, that we must keep away from flesh-diet. Meat-eating, you say, is murder. But what shall I do ? I have tried to live on

vegetarian diet. It is so tasteless. It kills my appetite. Tell me what I should do."

And Dadaji asked us to bring a big knife. It was quickly brought. Holding the knife in his hand, he said to the girl:—"My child! tell me how much flesh do you need. I shall cut it from my body and give it to you. But pray, do not have dumb, defenceless creatures killed!"

The words moved the heart of the little girl. Tears trickled down her cheeks, as she said:— "Dada! I promise I shall never touch flesh any more! I would rather starve than eat the flesh of a living creature!"

How many of our readers will be moved to say with this little girl:—"We would rather starve than eat the flesh of living creatures?" How many of us will hearken to the voice which comes to us travelling across the centuries:—"Blessed are the merciful"? How many of us will become helpers of birds and animals, friends of all creation? As many as do so will be abundantly blessed. They will be among the architects of a new civilisation, builders of a new humanity.

J. P. Vaswani

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL!

MY HEART FEELS SAD

I plead for mercy to the animals.

Can I, indeed, truly love God, if I do not love all things, all beings that God loveth?

Sometimes, sadness fills my heart, as I think of how so many of us live thoughtlessly, even when we see ourselves surrounded by suffering.

How oft we forget that creatures groan in pain!

BROTHERHOOD OF LIFE

Is there not a Brotherhood broader than the East, broader than the West?

Is there not a brotherhood broader than that of Humanity?

There is the Brotherhood of Life : to it belong birds and beasts, animals and insects.

India, today, is coming, alas! more and more, under alien influences. India is forgetting her great traditions and the teachings of her ancient Rishis,—the seers and sages of this ancient Land.

I breathe out an aspiration that some of us may see in the forsaken and the weary, wandering ones, in the animal and in the bird, an Image of Krishna, the Buddha and the Christ. May we not forget that the ancient word, the highest word, the noblest word, is compassion, is love!

I KNOW NOT WHY!

I know not why, I have loved to listen to the singing of birds, from the beginning of my days. When I was a boy, I often visited a lake near my house. I loved to see a bird or two flying from tree to tree, moving from East to West. In the silence of that hour,—for that lake was visited by hardly one or two,—I gazed at the birds, gazed and gazed. I wondered how they sang so sweetly, yet in a language I could not understand! Ever since, I have loved to listen to the songs of the birds.

And one of my dreams was to dwell in a garden house, where birds would freely come and sing, pouring their notes in joy. Even now I love to listen to the singing of birds, as they sit on branches of yon tree, near the very room in which I work and sleep.

Why do I love to listen to the songs of the birds, though I know not their language? I often wonder where lies the link between me and the bird? It knows no spoken language, but it seems to speak to me the language of an unknown paradise. The language speaks to my heart and, listening to the song of *bulbul* or cuckoo, I have, from time to time, shed tears and lifted up my heart to Him, who is the Father of life,—of man and bird and beast.

Be kind, then, to the birds. Pelt not stones at birds. They, like you and all brothers and sisters of human kind, are children of the One Divine Father!

SANT TUKARAM AND THE BIRDS

Near the place of Sant Tukaram's meditations

in the forest there was a crop of corn. The owner of the corn often saw Tukaram sitting quietly in the forest.

The owner promised to give Tukaram half a maund of grain, if Tukaram would protect the corn from the birds. Tukaram agreed. But when the birds came for a meal, Tukaram said to himself:—

Are not the birds, too, God's creatures,—
Children of Vithal, the Beloved?
Are they not hungry?
Last year a famine spread far and wide:
This year God hath sent us a crop.
Have the birds no share in the crop of corn?
Must I turn them away?

Am I a true worshipper of Vishnu (God)
Or only a lip-worshipper?
If, indeed, I am a true devotee of the Beloved,
Then must I not chase away the birds:
I must release them,
Then greet them gladly
And feed them to their full!

The birds came, day by day : and Tukaram fed them, day by day,—as, in another country and another period in history, did St. Francis.

The proprietor of the corn,—a peasant,—came one day to see the field. He was taken aback when he found that the whole field was empty.

The peasant flew into a rage. Alas! he dragged the Saint by the hair and brought him to the *panchayat* (the city-council). They heard and they laughed : what else could they do?

LIFE IS ONE!

Life is one. So do not separate man from the animal or the bird.

The world is full of suffering. It is our duty to build a Brotherhood, a Fellowship of those who would bear and suffer for the poor and weak and serve them with love and compassion in their hearts.

In the measure in which you think you are happy, you must renounce for the sake of those who suffer. You must in return give of your life for the lives of those who are in need and suffering. You must become "an adventurer of self-sacrifice."

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE

Leibnitz, a French thinker, says that life on earth has three manifestations. Life sleeps in plants : life dreams in animals : life wakes in man.

Yes,—life is one. And the One Life, that wakes in man and dreams in animals, is a mystery that we can but gaze at in reverence.

So injure not the creatures that creep or fly.

ALL LIFE IS SACRED

All life, I regard, as sacred. And, it seems to me, in ethics we are concerned not alone with mankind but, also, with animals.

The ethical ideal, as I understand it, is :—Help all life; have sympathy with all life; avoid injuring anything living.

Consider if the animal, too, is not our brother. Some years ago, I read the following :—

"This man careth for all creatures. Are they his brothers and sisters that he should love them? And he said to them:—'Verily, these are your fellow-creatures: they are your brethren and sisters having the same breath of life in the Eternal.'"

And the words went into my heart.

GOD'S CHILDREN

For me not to love bird and beast would be not to love the Lord.

For His children are birds and beasts, no less than human beings.

WE ALL ARE ONE!

In silence, the feeling has grown on me that every cow and every dog and every bird is a note in the one symphony of the universe.

Krishna sings on His Flute for all,—not alone for thee, proud man!

And all creatures are children of the One Divine Mother of the universe.

THINK! THINK! THINK!

Modern civilisation has gone astray: it thinks from the head, not the heart.

Animals are become a victim of our "researches" in schools and colleges. We sacrifice animals by testing drugs on them and inoculating them with disease. We inflict tortures on them in order to demonstrate to our students lessons in the laboratory.

Think of the burdens we thrust on animals when we yoke them to carts or carriages.

Think of their cries as we cage them in railway trucks or on board the ships!

Think of the cruel way in which they are killed in the slaughter-house!

Think of the cruelties inflicted on the monkeys we export to foreign countries for petty profits!

Think of the bloody sacrifices at the temples and mosques!

Think of the starvation we inflict on the proverbially faithful animal, the dog!

MEAT-EATING IS MURDER!

To commune with the Earth-Spirit is to have a new feeling for the animal world.

The "lower" animals are then seen to be children of Mother Earth. To treat them harshly is wrong. To take them to the slaughter-house is a sin.

The "lower" animals are our brothers. This is what the greatest among the great ones of Humanity so richly realised. They had cosmic consciousness.

Yes : these animals are thy brothers. Kill them not. Believe me, meat-eating will, one day, be condemned as murder.

WHO WILL SAVE THEM?

The beautiful sentiment of kinship with the lower world survives in our custom of feeding birds and the fish and the ant and the cow. It is a custom most of the "educated" have ceased to respect.

The cry of the animals whom we slay for our sense-satisfaction rises in our cities every day: and see how mercilessly horses and oxen are beaten and driven by *garriwallas* and cartmen!

Who will save the animals?

WORK IN THE VILLAGE!

There is need of a strong village-organisation. Volunteers should be sent to the village-folk to ask them not to sell cattle to those who would slaughter them.

Workers should go out into different parts in Krishna's and Buddha's spirit of mercy, and build up centres of *daya dharma*,—the religion of humanity.

The movers and shakers of India, the makers of history, her true leaders and liberators have ever been the dreamers and music-makers of this dream and music of mercy,—the prophets and proclaimers of *ahimsa*.

THE MYSTIC VALUE OF THE BODY

According to Hindu thought the physical body is a vehicle of the *Atman* (Spirit). To express the *Atman*, the vehicle must be a fitting one.

Flesh-diet disturbs the vehicle, and it becomes less serviceable to express the spiritual.

A musician is at a disadvantage if given a broken instrument.

So the soul does not find it easy to function through a body nourished on unnatural food.

Walt Whitman did well to emphasise the mystic value of the body.

The motive of Hindu fasting, diet rules, breath-

ing exercises, etc., is to discipline the body so that, purified and refined, it may become a fit instrument for the *Atman*.

COMPANION OF THE LORD

The *brahmacharya* body is what Hindu culture aims at.

"*Brahmacharya*" is "moving with *Brahman*," "walking with God."

The man with the pure body, the *brahmacharya*-body, is, to quote the words of the Scriptures, "a companion of the Lord."

Such a body carries about a brain which transmits pure, noble thoughts through the ether.

Such a body becomes the vehicle of a mighty spiritual energy.

Such a body could not be built on meat-diet or any *himsa*-food.

THE LAW OF KARMA

Back of the ideal of reverence for all life and, therefore, the thought of "protection of animals" is India's theory of *jiva*. "*Jiva*" is, literally, "what is alive." *Jiva* is individuated *Atman* or soul. This is different from *prakriti* or matter. The *jiva* is associated with matter, but is not matter.

The *jiva* is in the lower animals, too. They attained to that stage in evolution, when consciousness of pleasure and pain appeared. Modern science tells us this consciousness is developed even when the body is in the bacterial stage.

The lower animal, thus, has its "rights." To voluntarily inflict pain upon it is to violate its

rights. Nor can we be unconcerned in causing it pain. For in obedience to the Law of Return (*Karma*), the pain I inflict upon another will come back to me, and the happiness I give to another will vibrate back to me, adding to my happiness.

ABOLISH ANIMAL SACRIFICES

The sacred Upanishad rightly says:—"*Ahimsa* is *yagna*, is true sacrifice."

Abolish animal sacrifices!

Surely, true religion should teach us to be guardians of birds and beasts,—our younger brethren.

As a Chinese sage said:—"The practice of religion involves as a first principle a loving, compassionate heart for all creatures."

And did not the English poet, Coleridge, voice the very teaching of the Rishis of India, when he said:—

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear Lord who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

THE ANIMAL WITHIN US

The soul of India has never countenanced the killing of creatures. The Vedas are India's most ancient scripture . They enjoin "mercy," not "sacrifice."

When the Vedas and the Upanishads speak of "*yagna*," they refer to "internal sacrifice," the

sacrifice of the "senses" and egoistic self-seeking impulses, the sacrifice of the "animal within" us.

Dharma is the great Indian word for "religion." And *dharma*, literally, is what "holds," "upholds" creation. "*Dharmo dharayati prajah.*" *Dharma* is what secures the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."

INDIA IS NOT FREE!

A cry of sorrow mingles with my morning meditations. O, the burden of the sin of daily slaughter in our cities!

A Free India, I had hoped, would abolish all forms of cruelty to animals. But India is not free. And no nation is truly free until the animal,—man's younger brother,—is free and happy.

We have adopted Ashoka's *dharmachakra* as our symbol. Are we true to the spirit of Ashoka and Ashoka's ideals?

STOP ALL SLAUGHTER!

I have heard educated Indians speak, echoing the words of Western books, of "humane" slaughter. As well might we speak of humane murder!

Stop *all* slaughter!

Animals and birds have, alas! no language which we can understand and in which they can tell us of their suffering and pain.

Won't you see in them your brothers and sisters? Won't you behold in animals and birds the shadow of evolving Humanity?

OUR URGENT NEED

Some of the thinkers of our days have seen the weakness of our civilisation.

Spengler went so far as to speak of the "downfall of the West." He pointed out that nations of the West were crumbling to their fall.

India is being influenced by the West. There is cruelty in the name of science : there is cruelty in our fashions and our dress.

What is the urgent need of modern life?

A new sympathy will give us new ideals in education.

THE SIN OF CURRENT CIVILISATION

The time has come when we should rekindle in us the faith of the Vedic Rishi who said:—"Look upon all sentient beings with friendly eyes."

Current civilisation suffers from cruelty. There is cruelty in our laboratories : we call it "vivisection."

There is cruelty in our sports and fashion : how we destroy birds for beautiful feathers!

There is cruelty in our diet.

There is cruelty in our dealings with dogs and horses. This cruelty (*himsa*) is entering, more and more, into Indian life, also. This cruelty reacts on our character.

STRONGER THAN ROCKS

In a pretty, little story, we read that the Angels asked God if there was anything in the world stronger than rocks.

"Yes," answered God; "stronger than rocks is iron : for iron can break rock."

"Anything stronger than iron?" asked the Angels.

And the Lord answered:—"Fire; for iron may be melted in fire."

"Anything stronger than fire?" asked the Angels.

And the Lord said:—"Yes, water; for fire is quenched by water."

"Anything stronger than water?" the Angels asked again.

And the Lord answered:—"Yes, wind; for wind may scatter water."

"Anything stronger than wind?" asked the Angels.

"Yes," said the Lord; "sympathy is stronger. And nothing there be that is stronger than the compassionate heart."

Compassion, *maitri*, will be the key to the new social order.

THE FAITH OF ST. FRANCIS

On October 4, over seven centuries ago, passed away the great saint, the great awakener of his age,—St. Francis.

He was a lover of the bird and the beast, even as he loved the lily and the tree, the sun and the moon and the stars. He loved them all, calling them his "brothers" and "sisters." He loved them as he loved the simple folk,—the peasants, the village-folk of Assisi.

It was St. Francis who said:—"May the birds be blessed, and every creature that has breath

be blessed!"

This faith of St. Francis is the ancient faith of the Buddha and Mahavira. It is the faith which illumined, in our days, the life and teaching of Mahatma Gandhi.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

I would humbly ask you to do what you can to influence students' opinion, youth opinion, in regard to animal welfare.

Legislation, you say,—yes. But what is legislation? What is the State?

Legislation must work through men.

And if your children are going to grow, in the years of their manhood, to be patriots of the true type, you must ask them to look with friendly eyes upon the bird and the beast.

The State has two sides. One, I call the "form-side,"—that which we call "organisation." The other, I call the "function-side." Organisation is necessary : but it is not so important, I submit, as the functioning of the State. And the State must function through the heart and through wisdom. So you must teach your students, you must teach young men to think of birds and beasts as their brothers and sisters. Build your work in the minds and hearts of students and youths of this generation.

[In an address]

BOND WITH THE ETERNAL

Our education should not link us only with the poor. Our education should be a communion

not only with the needy, the humble and the oppressed. There is a world which is speechless, the world of the dumb ones, the world of birds and beasts.

Our students should be linked with this speechless world.

The students should be servants of these dumb ones, whom so many of us trample upon in utter thoughtlessness.

May the teaching move on, from student to student, that this speechless world, also, has its voice, the great voice which calleth us to compassion!

This speechless world may thus become our bond with the Eternal.

TWO-FOLD TREASURE

If, indeed, students be trained in a school of *ahimsa*, harmlessness, of reverence for life, they, in the years of their manhood, would receive a two-fold treasure:—(1) the treasure of a new conscience, sensitive to suffering and compassionate to every creature; and (2) the treasure of a new knowledge that would understand India's holy, hidden tradition of sympathy.

NEW PROPHETS

History is a story of noble struggles in defence of human rights : and I bow to the patriots and martyrs of Humanity.

Centuries have been spent in this mighty struggle for the freedom of man.

Yet my heart has cried, again and again:—

"When may we hear the voice of the prophets of animal rights? The voice of the great saviours of birds and beasts? When?"

SARVODAYA

He, who is inspired by the motive which sees one's own good in the welfare of others, will draw an increasing number to the service of man,—the service of the Universe.

And are not the animals, too, children of the Universe?

Yet we send them to the slaughter-house!

Meat-eating, unfortunately, is a growing habit.

NINE RULES

The ancient ethic of China, to which Lao-Tse bore witness, was practised by contemplatives in their monasteries. In the rules of Taoism is enshrined a whole theory, put into practice, of compassion which is essential to the re-building of our civilisation, which suffers today from decadence.

Here are some of the rules put into practice by the Taoist monks:—

1. Thou shalt not whip nor beat domestic animals.
2. Thou shalt not intentionally or carelessly crush beneath thy feet insects and ants.
3. Thou shalt not climb trees to take nests and destroy the eggs.
4. Thou shalt not take delight in fish-hooks or arrows in order to get amusement.
5. Thou shalt not catch birds or animals in

snares and nets.

6. Thou shalt not alarm and scare away birds sitting in their nests.

7. Thou shalt not pluck flowers nor pluck up grass without reason.

8. Thou shalt not cut down trees without reason.

9. Thou shalt not burn commons nor hillside woods.

MY DAILY PRAYER

Animals bear the burden and heat of the day. Their lives are guileless. They labour for our well-being. And it is our duty to do all we can to give them our loving-kindness.

Every night, as I go to my bed, I offer the prayer:—"Save them, O Master-Saviour of the World! Save them!"

I recall the words of a spiritual teacher of India:—"O Father! it is my aspiration that I should regard the lives of all creatures as my own, promote their happiness, remove their miseries and banish their fear!"

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY!

One of the sayings in Mahayana Buddhism is:—"As long as living creatures suffer, there is no possibility of joy to those who are full of compassion."

So the Mahayana asks us to pray for all beings (1) that they may suffer no want; (2) that all be spared pain and sickness; (3) that no beings may be deserted and oppressed; and (4) that all beings may pass a happy life free from care.

THE LAMP OF LOVE

"Beasts and birds," says the *Qura'n*, "are a people like you, and to their Lord shall they return." One of the great "sayings" of Muhammed is:—"Creation is a family."

Gautama Buddha realised this truth on that eventful Vaisakhi when, sitting beneath the Bodhi Tree, he saw creatures as a chain of causation, and the world as a wheel of *Karma*. And to live aright, he taught that one must walk the way of *dharma*.

The Buddha gave the message of *dharma*, of *daya dharma*, the Religion of Kinship and Compassion. And, on the last day of his earth-life, as his body lay stretched beneath two trees, and his beloved disciple, Ananda, with tear-filled eyes, asked of the Master to give a parting message, the Buddha said:—"Weep not for me, Ananda! Hold fast to the Lamp of *dharma!*" The lamp of *daya dharma* is the Lamp of Compassion and Love.

Of the "ten inhibitions" in Buddhist philosophy, the very first inhibition is:—"Thou shalt not kill."

HUMANITARIANISM

The modern world is face to face with many problems. To solve them we need the light of a New Renaissance and a New Faith in life. Humanitarianism is rooted in Faith in life.

The eminent French thinker rightly said:—"The *heart* has its reasons which reason knows not."

The world is waiting to listen to simple things and simple men.

Humanitarianism stands for the gospel of simple life and the spirit of creative sympathy.

Humanitarianism is inspired by an intuition of the kinship of all sentient life, a vision of the Fellowship and Brotherhood of life.

In its larger sense, humanitarianism covers the whole field of unselfish service.

REVERENCE FOR LIFE

Reverence for life is the fundamental concept of ethics. Ethics is reverence for life. Its one eventful rule, one *sadhana*, is that I give myself for other lives. For, all life is sacred, even the life of savages, of primitive peoples, of uncivilised ones, of wild jungle men, of the criminal, the robber,—of the bird and the beast.

All life is sacred. All life has its claims on every one of us. True ethics, therefore, rests on a recognition of this thought,—the reverence for life.

When we renounce this reverence for life, we sink into unreason, into thoughtlessness. Every time there is war, there is lack of thought. War is irrational and, as results have shown, no party in the war really wins. War is a game of unreason.

Reverence for life includes (1) sympathy or fellow-feeling, and (2) something more, i.e., love.

Reverence for life is love for all living beings,—the whole universe. This reverence makes it imperative on us not to cause pain to anybody. This pain is triple,—pain by thought, pain by word, pain by deed.

PAIN,—A MYSTERY

Why is there pain? Who can answer the question?

Pain is a mystery, for life is a mystery.

Enough for him, who has reverence for life, to know that there is pain, there is suffering.

Enough for him to say, "I, too, shall bear a part of the burden of the pain that mars the life of the world and the life of humanity."

BUILDING A NEW WORLD

A Free India must needs co-operate with the forces for the making of a New World.

And if, indeed, a new world is to emerge, we must strive against :—(1) ignorance; (2) poverty; (3) injustice: and (4) cruelty.

The use of knowledge and power for destruction and not for service, I regard as a form of cruelty.

Man, indeed, has gathered knowledge and power. Is he using them for service or for destruction ?

Sympathy, I regard as a fundamental law of the life of everyone who would build and beautify the world.

YUDHISHTHIRA AND THE DOG

Yudhishthira of the Great Heart stands,—so we read in the *Mahabharata*,—before the gate of heaven.

And the Angel at the gate tells him:—"Come, enter thou the heaven!"

Yudhishthira says:—"The dog is with me!"

The Angel says to him:—"You must leave the dog behind."

Yudhishthira says:—"Faithful has been the

dog to me : I cannot leave the dog,—no! Not for the sake of God !"

"Come!" says the Angel; "let the beast stand outside. Enter thou!"

Yudhishthira says:—"I cannot enter heaven alone!"

And the dog changes its form. The dog becomes *dharma* and says to Yudhishthira:—"Well done! Enter thou the highest heaven!"

And into the Kingdom of Krishna man cannot enter alone. Man must receive into his brotherhood both bird and beast. And without their blessings, their association, their comradeship, and without a heart of helpful love, man cannot fulfil his pilgrimage nor enter the highest heaven. In the words of the Blessed One :—

> For whoso beholds in every form
> The One Living life,
> Sees all separate living things
> Issued from the One :
> Such an one hath Brahman!
> He attains!

WHICH EDUCATION?

I believe all education is defective which does not teach sympathy with birds and beasts.

I believe, too, that without teaching our students to do their best for God's creatures, all efforts at character-building must fail.

LEAGUES OF MERCY

Leagues of Mercy should be started throughout

the country.

In the Mira School some of us feed birds and beasts, everyday.

In all schools of Bharata there should be a net-work of such Leagues of Mercy.

School-boys and school-girls should be taught to give their sympathy to birds and animals.

Well sang the poet :—

> Amongst the noblest in the land,
> Though he may count himself the least,
> That man I honour and revere,
> Who, without favour and without fear,
> In a great city dares to stand,
> The friend of every friendless beast.

VICTIMS OF RESEARCH

Today, in many places, animals are victims of research. They are made to suffer tortures in order that students may be shown scientific truths, which are perfectly well-known already. Why not show students experiments with the help of frogs and animals who have died a natural death?

There are other sufferings of animals, too. Vagrant dogs are shot at sight or poisoned. Then, there are horrors of cattle-trucks and transport steamers and aeroplanes. Referring to them, a man of letters wrote, not long ago:—"If we really knew a hundredth part of the agony of animals, we should rather starve than profit by it."

There are cruelties, too, inflicted on animals in hunting and circus shows. Think, too, of the roughness and cruelty in our slaughter-houses. Then there are cocks and hens done to horrible

deaths in our kitchen.

These and other sufferings of animals should be put a stop to, as early as possible.

THE FACE OF GANDHI

I plead for animals and birds. I humbly appeal that you will help to protect them from cruelties of fashion, cruelties committed in the name of science and research.

These dumb, defenceless creatures have done us no harm. They have no power to resist us. They are victims of our tyranny.

Who will come to their rescue, if not the Government of Free India ? O, let your legislation reflect the spirit of the Father of the Nation! Let your laws reveal the radiant Face of the great-souled Gandhi!

AHIMSA

To live the life of *ahimsa* is to live in sweetness and light. To live thus is to grow in the vision of unity.

None is your enemy. You are protected by the Divine Plan.

Ahimsa is peace with all. *Ahimsa* is harmony. *Ahimsa* is attunement to the Life Universal. *Ahimsa* is self-surrender to the One Life, the One Spirit, the One Divine Will, that works in all.

NEW AWAKENING

A new awakening is the world's piteous need, today.

O! For sons and daughters of Krishna and Christ, of Buddḥa and Mahavira, of Nanak and Francis, to reveal anew the beauty of reverence for life,—sons and daughters who would, renouncing greed and greatness, be among the servants of animals and humanity.

A NEW CIVILISATION

Current civilisation is decadent because it turns a dead ear to the ever-increasing agony of men and women, of birds and beasts.

The foundation of a new civilisation must be the service of mercy or love.

This service grows out of reverence for life, for all life.

In this service is the strength of altruistic men and women.

In this service is the strength which noble servants of humanity and creation receive to bear the burden of suffering and responsibility laid upon them, year after year.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL!

There is a Voice within each man. It makes the heart a channel of wisdom and love.

And the more we study the life and consciousness of the lower animals, the more do we learn of their sociality, their intelligence, their emotions, their essential kinship with man.

In justifying the killing of beasts and birds for food, sport and vivisection, Christendom is trampling upon the teaching of the Master who gave the great message of Mercy and Love.

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